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(54) Title: PROTEASE INHIBITORS IN ABSORBENT ARTICLES

## (57) Abstract

The invention provides an absorbent article, at least a portion of which has a protease inhibitor incorporated therein to decrease the activity of fecal proteases that may otherwise initiate or contribute to inflammation of the skin of a wearer of the article resulting in diaper rash or diaper dermatitis. Preferably the article further comprises a delivery system for releasably containing and delivering the protease inhibitor to at least a portion of the skin of the wearer. More preferably, the delivery system comprises a skin care composition and at least a portion of the composition, including the protease inhibitor, is automatically transferred from the article to the wearer's skin without manual intervention during normal usage of the article to form a defense against fecal proteases at the skin-feces interface. Most preferably, repeated application of similarly treated articles to the wearer's skin provides an available source from which the protease inhibitor continuously transfers onto the skin over time and accumulates to provide a proactive defense against fecal proteases for the reduction or prevention of diaper dermatitis due to proteolytic enzymes.

